Private (My)

8 Clayton Place Kennington Road
London July 24 - 1860

My very dear Friend

At last I write you – and yet what can I say – How can I hope to make myself understood – believed – forgiven.

You have given me no cause of offence – have perfectly fulfilled with scrupulous delicacy every, the nicest claim or suggestion of friendship – I am more fervent in my pure esteem for you than even in our moments of closest conversational or written communication – You have invited frankness – confidence – and you should have had it – if I could have put a window in my heart and said, See there, am I not worthy of your trust; – and yet I have not been frank nor confiding, nor even respectful. O these fits of silence – this unconquerable reserve in words – which has before caused me to wound my dearest friend. I have meant all I have ever said – felt more than I ever attempted to convey. I know I can appreciate a friend – and I have and do appreciate you, and would glory to do so by suffering were it required.

At other periods of my history I have dropt correspondence as I have done in your case, and with all, in the way of sentimental communication since I came home. Domestic affairs have harassed me with – the uncertainty of my future prospects, & impending pecuniary responsibilities – I feel kinder and gentler towards others – my own mental sufferings make me sympathise with every thing that has the capacity to feel. I have spent early mornings — late evenings, in my garden digging, weeding, ruminating, sighing — smiling to all but with a constant ache at the heart — yet confiding in no one — horrified at the idea of hinting to wife or child that I know not how I may be able to secure the comforts for which they look alone to me. This is the first confession of the kind I have ever made. Why do I make it to you? Let friendship answer and be assured that I could give you no stronger proof of the sympathy between us than this (though long delayed) baring of my position — But I feel I have not said enough — You will ask me what are your troubles — your visible tangible £. s. d. troubles — Well you shall know — A quarter's Rent, — taxes, — Insurance &c &c I should pay ere the close of this month — this, for the present — then for the future. Yet for neither present nor future am I provided. O how gladly would I go to some work congenial with my aspirations and my abilities could I get free from paralysing apprehensions and see my way clear to the realization of a humble competence. But while the dreadful incubus is on me I am prostrate — Enough of this — Let me write while I can of other things and on another sheet — Yours very affecty — G Thompson

(He then alludes to Dr Cheever's visit to England and his wish to accompany him to Scotland — were it not for this state of his affairs —)

2nd Letter - London July 25 - 1866

My sincere and dear friend

I do receive your letter, just to hand, "in the spirit in which it is offered" - and look through tears while I attempt to acknowledge it - which I must do briefly, as I am momentarily expecting Dr C- at my door. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend". Never yet did one offend me by fidelity - least of all could you - No - no - no - we must not cease to correspond - I wrote you yesterday an incoherent letter - fragmentary, jumbled, but truthful and sincere - telling you more than ever I told any one before - confessing to an impression that has long been familiar to me - and which may have been ~~regarded~~ received by some very near to me also which has caused me to be regarded as a wholly different being from what my usual conduct would indicate (alluding to his fits of silence) But do not quite cast me off - My offences are negative. Believe me, till you can quote word or act which causes in your mind the faintest suspicion that I ever intentionally appeared to you what I am not. There is one person in the world whom I blush to say I have often treated as I have treated you - that person is William Lloyd Garrison, but you can judge whether I do not feel towards him, & speak of him, as you would have your friend be, if he used your name when you were 3000 miles away. I have so treated Garrison and yet I have made sacrifices for him with joy & exultation & gloried in the persecution which for his sake. I have for the last 20 years endured and would for 20 more - ever yours - George Thompson

3rd Letter

20

London July 26 – 60

I will not attempt to thank you in words for yr sympathetic letter – but will try to do so in deeds – — My answer to that part of your letter communication which refers to what may be called business is soon given. I give you the most perfect freedom of action in regard to any plan that in your judgment promises to result in bringing me an alleviation of those cares which sorely press upon me. I have the most entire confidence in your prudence. Two objects bound my ambition – the support of my family and independent labour for the Anti S. cause – Whatever the friends of those movements, in promoting which I have spent more than half my life, may be disposed to contribute, I would labour to repay by the consecration of my future life to the advancement of the same principles. I do not ask relief from labour but only the means to live while I labour. I believe my personal friends in the U.S. would joyfully aid – and the friends here I trust might repose in my discretion. I would be the watchman on the tower – ever ready to meet a crisis – and always watching for the friendless & the dumb. I ask only faith in my honesty – freedom of action & support – So long as my general conduct on the question of Slavery is approved

Yours very affectionately Geo Thompson

My very dear friend/ Clayton Place July 28

When I mentioned to you my shortcomings towards my friend L. G. I did not mean to imply either that I had caused him pain by my silence – or suffered in his esteem in consequence. In many years ago we promised each other that however far divided by distance or lapse of correspondence – each should think & feel towards the other – as tho a steady correspondence had been uninterruptedly ~~[illegible]~~ kept up – and we have mutually

observed the promise – which I have not felt that this perfect
trust in the [illegible] the [illegible] in allowing to
many matters to [illegible]

Most affectionately yours ever

Your friend Geo Thompson